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TO AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ETRN, HA

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE ACTION TO MAINTAIN US AIRLINE POSITION
AND US INFLUENCE IN HAITIAN CIVIL AVIATION AFFAIRS

REF: (A) PORT AU PRINCE 836; (B) STATE 77220;
(C) STATE 6609

1. DUE URGENCY INDICATED REF A, BACKGROUND PROVIDED HERE-
WITH, RATHER THAN BY LETTER. EXCEPT AS INDICATED, ALL OF
WHAT FOLLOWS IS FOR EMBASSY'S INFORMATION ONLY.

2. SINCE HAITIAN AUTHORITIES MAY MAKE CONNECTION BETWEEN
PROGRESS IN ISSUANCE PERMIT TO HAITI AIR TRANSPORT (HAT)
AND CLIMATE OF OVERALL US-HAITIAN AIR RELATIONS, EMBASSY
SHOULD BE AWARE CURRENT STATUS HAT PERMIT. ALTHOUGH CAB
ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE'S RECOMMENDATION HAS BEEN FOR-
WARDED TO THE BOARD FOR DECISION, NORMAL PROCESS, INCLUDING
SUBMISSION TO WHITE HOUSE, COULD MEAN SEVERAL MORE MONTHS
MAY ELAPSE BEFORE ACTION ON PERMIT APPLICATION IS COMPLETED.
CERTAIN FACTORS COULD CAUSE FURTHER DELAY. THESE ARE:

A. ROLE OF AIR FRANCE IN NEW AIRLINE. CAB PROBABLY WOULD
BE RELUCTANT ISSUE PERMIT WITHOUT ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
REGARDING EXACT AIR FRANCE RELATIONSHIP WITH HAT, WHAT
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SERVICES AIR FRANCE WILL PERFORM, E.G., MANAGEMENT, CREW

TRAINING, ETC. THIS CONCERN ARISES OUT OF POTENTIAL FOR

AIR FRANCE TO BENEFIT FROM HAT OPERATIONS TO U.S. THUS CAB MIGHT HAVE DIFFICULTY APPROVING PERMIT WITHOUT CONDITIONS OR WITHOUT MAKING AIR FRANCE PARTY IN CAB PROCEEDING IF AIR FRANCE WERE SHOWN HAVE SUBSTANTIAL ROLE IN HAT OPERATIONS OR CONTROL.

B. EXTENSIVE ROUTES TO US REQUESTED BY HAT. AS INDICATED PARA 2 REF C, BASED ON ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS CAB PROBABLY WOULD NOT BE DISPOSED GRANT ALL ROUTES REQUESTED. IN THIS REGARD COMPARISON FOR EXAMPLE OF HAT ROUTE REQUEST WITH RIGHTS NOW ENJOYED BY DOMINICAN REPUBLIC WOULD MAKE HAITIAN REQUEST SEEM EXCESSIVE. THOUGH SMALLER IN POPULATION, THE LARGER, RICHER DR ACTUALLY GENERATES ALMOST FOUR TIMES AS MUCH AIRLINE PASSENGER TRAFFIC AS HAITI. SPECIFICALLY, AND WITHOUT BEING ABLE SPECULATE WHAT ACTION BOARD ITSELF MIGHT TAKE, CAB STAFF CONCERNED THAT PRESENT TRAFFIC DEMAND DOES NOT JUSTIFY ADDITIONAL SERVICE AT SAN JUAN AND IT MAY RECOMMEND THIS ROUTE BE DELETED. IF REQUEST FOR SAN JUAN WERE WITHDRAWN, CHANCES OF EARLY ACTION WOULD PROBABLY BE GREATER.

3. WITH RESPECT EMBASSY CONSIDERATION OF STEPS US AIRLINES PRESENTLY SERVING HAITI MIGHT UNDERTAKE TO STRENGTHEN THEIR POSITION THERE, AS EMBASSY AWARE THERE IS HISTORY OF GOH AUTHORITIES ATTEMPTING PLAY ONE US AIRLINE OFF AGAINST ANOTHER. THUS DEPT AND CAB WOULD BE RELUCTANT ENCOURAGE ANY MOVES WHICH MIGHT GIVE ONE US AIRLINE ADVANTAGE OVER OTHERS. ANY AGREEMENT BETWEEN HAT AND ANY US AIRLINE WOULD REQUIRE CAB APPROVAL, AND CAB STAFF INDICATES BOARD MIGHT NOT APPROVE ANY RELATIONSHIP GIVING A SINGLE US AIRLINE SERVING HAITI SUBSTANTIAL ROLE WITH HAT.

4. WITH REGARD US AIRLINES' RELATIONSHIP TO HAT, WE WILL EXPLORE WITH US AIRLINES SOME SCHEME WHEREBY EACH OF THE THREE SERVING HAITI COULD PROVIDE SOME SERVICE TO HAT. FOR EXAMPLE, AND PURELY FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES, AMERICAN MIGHT PROVIDE CREW TRAINING ON USUAL BASIS, PAN AM MIGHT ASSIST IN SEEKING OTHER US CARRIER WILLING TO

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LEASE NEEDED EQUIPMENT, OR IN PROVIDING TERMINAL SERVICES FOR THE NEW AIRLINE AT DUVALIER (WHERE PAN AM HAS SIGNIFICANT INTEREST IN CONTINUING TO OPERATE AIRPORT), AND EASTERN MIGHT BE WILLING CONSIDER MAINTENANCE CONTRACT WITH HAT SINCE EASTERN'S EXTENSIVE FACILITIES AT MIAMI WOULD LEND THEMSELVES TO SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT. EMBASSY SHOULD NOT DISCUSS FOREGOING WITH LOCAL US AIRLINES REPRESENTATIVES PENDING APPROACH TO AIRLINES HERE.

5. WITH RESPECT HAT PERMIT APPLICATION, PROCESSING COULD BE FACILITATED, ACCORDING CAB STAFF, IF OTHER HAITIAN

APPLICATIONS NOW PENDING WERE WITHDRAWN. WE HAVE HAD INDICATIONS THAT HAITI OVERSEAS APPLICATION WOULD BE WITHDRAWN AND WE ASSUME THAT GOH NO LONGER SUPPORTS EXISTING PERMIT AND APPLICATION FOR AMENDMENT OF AIR HAITI. UNLESS EMBASSY FEELS SUCH A COURSE WOULD BE NON-PRODUCTIVE, IT SHOULD SUGGEST TO GOH THAT IT FORMALLY WITHDRAW AIR HAITI AND HAITI OVERSEAS APPLICATIONS NOW PENDING BEFORE BOARD. MOST APPROPRIATE RESPONSE WOULD BE DIPLOMATIC NOTE FROM GOH REQUESTING THIS WITHDRAWAL. FYI. IF GOH NOT DISPOSED MAKE SUCH WITHDRAWAL, THESE APPLICATIONS PROBABLY WILL DELAY PROCESSING HAT'S PERMIT SLIGHTLY, BUT BOTH WOULD ULTIMATELY EITHER BE DENIED OR SIMPLY NOT ACTED UPON. END FYI.

6. IN SAME CONTEXT EMBASSY MAY EXPRESS USG DESIRE RESPOND AS FULLY AS POSSIBLE TO EXRESSED GOH WISH TO ESTABLISH NEW HAT OPERATION IN NEAR FUTURE, AND MAKE FOLLOWING POINTS:

A. UNDER US REGULATION, CAB REQUIRED INVESTIGATE RELATIONSHIP OF ANY OTHER AIRLINE WITH APPLICANT. NORMAL BUT COMPLEX PROCESS OF HEARINGS, ALLOWANCE OF TIME FOR RESPONSES, ETC., COULD DELAY FINAL ACTION ON HAT PERMIT IF ANY FOREIGN AIRLINE HAS SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIP WITH NEW HAITIAN CARRIER.

B. IF GOH INTERESTED IN US AIRLINE ASSISTANCE FOR HAT ON NORMAL COMMERCIAL BASIS, US AUTHORITIES PREPARED LOOK INTO THIS INFORMALLY.

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C. LONGSTANDING US POLICY, IN LINE WITH PRINCIPLES ESPOUSED BY MOST COUNTRIES, IS TO COMPARE RELATIVE SIZE OF MARKET OFFERED BY EACH PROSPECTIVE PARTNER, AND TO SEEK OR GRANT AIR TRAFFIC RIGHTS IN LINE WITH MARKET SIZE. ROUTES REQUESTED BY HAT MIGHT BE DIFFICULT TO SUPPORT FULLY ON ECONOMIC GROUNDS USED BY BOARD. FOR EXAMPLE, ECONOMIC GROUNDS FOR SAN JUAN ROUTE APPEAR BE WEAK. GOH SHOULD NOT ASSUME, THEREFORE, THAT CAB WILL BE ABLE TO

ISSUE PERMIT FOR ALL ROUTES REQUESTED.

7. IN DISCUSSION OF POINT OUTLINED IN 6(A) ABOVE, EMBASSY SHOULD SEEK IN LOW KEY ANY INFORMATION POSSIBLE TO OBTAIN REGARDING AIR FRANCE ACTUAL RELATIONSHIP WITH HAT: FINAN-

CIAL TIES, POSSIBLE MANAGEMENT CONTRACT OR RELATIONSHIP, LIKELY PRESENCE OF AIR FRANCE PERSONNEL OR FORMER PERSONNEL IN HAT STRUCTURE, POSSIBLE PROVISION OF CREWS OR AIRCRAFT, ETC., AND REPORT.

8. AS EMBASSY AWARE, HAITI AMBASSADOR HERE HAS SENT FIRST-PERSON NOTE REQUESTING THAT HAT PERMIT BE GRANTED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, CITING PLANS TO BEGIN OPERATION TO THE US ON OR ABOUT JUNE 15. DEPT DOES NOT PLAN FORMAL RESPONSE TO THIS NOTE, BUT EMBASSY MAY WISH MENTION IT IN CONVERSATIONS SUGGESTED ABOVE AND STATE THAT, WHILE CAB WILL ATTEMPT EXPEDITE CASE, TARGET DATE OF JUNE 15 WOULD SEEM SOMEWHAT UNREALISTIC. RUSH

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